

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1 1. (Currently amended) A computer implemented method of initiating a
2 transfer of funds from one online account to another in a computer network, comprising:
3 receiving from a first user a request to establish an online account;
4 establishing a master online account;
5 receiving account access information for a bank account from the first user,
6 wherein once the bank account is verified the first user is able to transfer funds between the
7 master online account and the bank account;
8 verifying, using the account information, whether the first user has access to the
9 bank account; and if verified;
10 establishing one or more sub-accounts linked to the master online account,
11 wherein for transactions involving each sub-account, actual funds are transferred between the
12 bank account and the master online account;
13 receiving a transfer request from ~~the first user~~ a second user, the transfer request
14 including an amount of funds for transfer from ~~the online account associated with one of said~~
15 sub-accounts linked to the first ~~[[user]]~~ online account and identification information for a
16 recipient of the funds, the identification information including an electronic message address for
17 the recipient;
18 automatically sending an electronic message to the recipient using the electronic
19 message address, the electronic message indicating that funds are ready for transfer to the
20 recipient;
21 receiving a response from the recipient, wherein the response includes a request to
22 establish an online account for the recipient; ~~[[and]]~~
23 establishing a second an online account associated with the recipient; and

24 transferring said amount of funds from the bank account associated with the
25 master online account to a bank account associated with the recipient's online account.

1 2. (Currently amended) The computer implemented method of claim 1,
2 wherein the response from the recipient includes an indication from the recipient
3 accepting or rejecting the transfer of funds; and wherein ~~the method further includes:~~
4 transferring said amount of funds only occurs ~~from the online account associated~~
5 ~~with the first user to the second online account associated with the recipient~~ if the response
6 indicates acceptance.

1 3. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the
2 bank account is one of a checking account and a savings account.

1 4. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the
2 step of verifying comprises the steps of:
3 causing a small deposit to be made to the bank account using the account access
4 information;
5 notifying the first user that a deposit has been made to the bank account;
6 requesting from the first user identification of the amount of the deposit;
7 receiving a response from the first user identifying the amount of the deposit; and
8 verifying whether the amount identified in the response matches the amount
9 deposited in the bank account, whereby the bank account is verified if a match occurs.

1 5. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 4, wherein the
2 small deposit has a value of between 0.01 dollars and 1.00 dollar, inclusive.

1 6. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 2, wherein the
2 account access information and the response are received from the user over the Internet.

1 7. (Currently amended) The computer implemented method of claim 1,
2 further including the step of transferring funds from the banking account to the master online

3 account associated with the first user in response to a request to transfer funds if the bank
4 account is verified.

1 8. (Currently amended) The computer implemented method of claim 1,
2 further including the step of transferring funds from the master online account associated with
3 the first user to the bank account in response to a request to transfer funds if the banking account
4 is verified.

1 9. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the
2 step of verifying comprises the steps of:
3 causing two or more small deposits to the banking account using the account
4 access information;
5 notifying the user that the two or more deposits have been made to the banking
6 account;
7 requesting from the user identification of the amounts of each of the two or more
8 deposits;
9 receiving a response from the user identifying the amounts of each of the two or
10 more deposits;
11 verifying whether the amounts identified in the response match the amounts
12 deposited in the banking account, whereby the account is verified if a match occurs.

1 10. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 9, wherein each of
2 the small deposits has a value of between 0.01 dollars and 1.00 dollar, inclusive.

1 11. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the
2 account access information is received from the first user over the Internet.

1 12. (Original) The computer implemented method of claim 1, wherein the
2 account access information includes an account number.

1 13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein establishing
2 includes:
3 receiving account access information for a second bank account from the
4 recipient, wherein once the second bank account is verified, the recipient is able to transfer funds
5 between the second online account and the second bank account; and
6 verifying, using the account access information received from the recipient,
7 whether the recipient has access to the second bank account.

1 14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 13, wherein verifying
2 whether the recipient has access to the second bank account comprises:
3 causing a small deposit to be made to the second bank account using the account
4 access information received from the recipient;
5 notifying the recipient that one or more deposits have been made to the second
6 bank account;
7 requesting from the recipient identification of the amount of the one or more
8 deposits;
9 receiving a response from the recipient identifying the amounts of the one or more
10 deposits; and
11 verifying whether the amount identified in the recipient's response matches the
12 one or more amounts deposited in the bank account, whereby the second bank account is verified
13 if a match occurs.

1 15. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein the first user determines an amount
2 of funds available for each sub-account.

1 16. (New) A computer implemented method of initiating a transfer of funds
2 from one online account to another in a computer network, comprising:
3 receiving from a first user a request to establish an online account;
4 establishing a master online account;

5 receiving account access information for a bank account from the first user;
6 verifying, using the account information, whether the first user has access to the
7 bank account, wherein once the bank account is verified the first user is able to transfer funds
8 between the master online account and the bank account;
9 establishing one or more sub-accounts linked to the master online account,
10 wherein the first user determines an amount of funds available for each sub-account, and wherein
11 for transactions involving each sub-account, actual funds are transferred between the bank
12 account and the master online account;
13 receiving a transfer request from a second user, the transfer request including an
14 amount of funds for transfer from one of said sub-accounts linked to the first online account and
15 identification information for a recipient of the funds, the identification information including an
16 electronic message address for the recipient;
17 automatically sending an electronic message to the recipient using the electronic
18 message address, the electronic message indicating that funds are ready for transfer to the
19 recipient;
20 receiving a response from the recipient, and
21 transferring said amount of funds from the bank account associated with the
22 online account to a bank account associated with the recipient if the response includes and
23 indication from the recipient accepting the transfer of funds.

1 17. (New) The method of claim 16, wherein the response from the recipient
2 includes a request to establish an online account for the recipient, and wherein the method further
3 includes establishing a second online account associated with the recipient;